



NATIONAL
CHARTER SCHOOL
RESOURCE CENTER

Identifying Indicators of Distress in Charter Schools

Prepare, Prevent, and Respond
Supplemental Workbook for Reflection



The National Charter School Resource Center (NCSRC) provides technical assistance to federal grantees and resources supporting charter sector stakeholders working across the charter school life cycle. NCSRC is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and managed by Manhattan Strategy Group in partnership with WestEd.

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Workbook Introduction

This workbook is a companion to the “Identifying Indicators of Distress in Charter Schools: Prepare, Prevent, and Respond” asynchronous video series. This workbook guides your team through the activities shared in each of the videos. Use it to record your thoughts, as well as your team’s thoughts, related to the discussion prompts.

How to Create Effective Systems that Prepare for Distress

This section is designed to help guide your team’s discussion of **Part 1 of 3 videos** for asynchronous facilitation. Please follow the prompts in the video and complete the workbook as instructed.

Leadership

What systems are in place to execute the school’s vision, mission, and goals?
Click or tap here to enter text.

How and how often do we measure if impact is being made by these systems?
Click or tap here to enter text.

How are knowledge and responsibilities of processes and systems communicated to current and new leadership and staff?
Click or tap here to enter text.

How does the school hold itself accountable that these systems are enforced?
Click or tap here to enter text.

Are there areas where systems are in place but not executed?
Click or tap here to enter text.

What systems are missing?	Where do systems exist but are not codified or followed?	Where do systems need to be improved?
<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>

Rank how well your school is doing on implementing **leadership** systems on a scale of 1-5 (1 being we have no systems in place to 5 being we have systems in place and they are working well).
Click or tap here to enter text.

Governing Board

What is the board's long-term sustainability strategy?

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

How effective are systems to support leadership in overcoming both “smoldering” and “sudden” challenges?

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

How are we aligning board processes with the authorizer accountability framework?

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

What is the process for ensuring the board is staying on top of school and community needs?

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

What systems are missing?	Where do systems exist but are not codified or followed?	Where do systems need to be improved?
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

Rank how well your school is doing on implementing **governing board** systems on a scale of 1-5 (1 being we have no systems in place to 5 being we have systems in place and they are working well).

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Finance and Operations

How and how often are we tracking enrollment? Re-enrollment?

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

What processes and systems do we have in place to achieve our enrollment targets?

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

How do our financial processes ensure that proper internal controls are in place to provide clear delineation of roles for individuals dealing with the authorization of purchases, the disbursement of funds, and legal compliance and reporting?

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

What systems are missing?	Which systems exist but are not codified or followed?	Where do systems need to be improved?
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

Rank how well your school is doing on implementing **finance and operations** systems on a scale of 1-5 (1 being we have no systems in place to 5 being we have systems in place and they are working well).

Click or tap here to enter text.

Talent

What is our long-term strategy for teacher recruitment and retention?

Click or tap here to enter text.

What systems are in place to develop and sustain teacher capacity?

Click or tap here to enter text.

How do we measure if impact is being made by these systems?

Click or tap here to enter text.

What systems are missing?	Which systems exist but are not codified or followed?	Where do systems need to be improved?
<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>

Rank how well your school is doing on implementing **talent** systems on a scale of 1-5 (1 being we have no systems in place to 5 being we have systems in place and they are working well).

Click or tap here to enter text.

Culture

How can school operations and processes support a positive environment?

Click or tap here to enter text.

Where are students most likely to be disruptive?

Click or tap here to enter text.

What are the changes necessary to help reduce or eliminate this disruption?

Click or tap here to enter text.

How are our disciplinary processes consistently enforced?

Click or tap here to enter text.

What is our strategy for family and community engagement?

Click or tap here to enter text.

What systems are missing?	Which systems exist but are not codified or followed?	Where do systems need to be improved?
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

Rank how well your school is doing on implementing **culture** systems on a scale of 1-5 (1 being we have no systems in place to 5 being we have systems in place and they are working well).

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Instruction

How have we aligned our curriculum with the state standards?

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

What are the processes to ensure vertical alignment of curriculum across grade levels?

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Is our course scheduling working to support our priorities?

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

What systems are in place to support high-quality instruction and student learning supports?

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

What is the process for remediation when a student fails to meet proficiency?

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

What are the processes and logistical supports for ensuring below-grade-level students thrive?

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

What systems are missing?	Which systems exist but are not codified or followed?	Where do systems need to be improved?
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

Rank how well your school is doing on implementing **instruction** systems on a scale of 1-5 (1 being we have no systems in place to 5 being we have systems in place and they are working well).

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Ranking the Domains

How did your team rank each domain:

Domain	Your Rank	Your Team's Average
Leadership	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
Governing Board	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
Finance and Operation	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
Talent	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
Culture	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
Instruction	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>

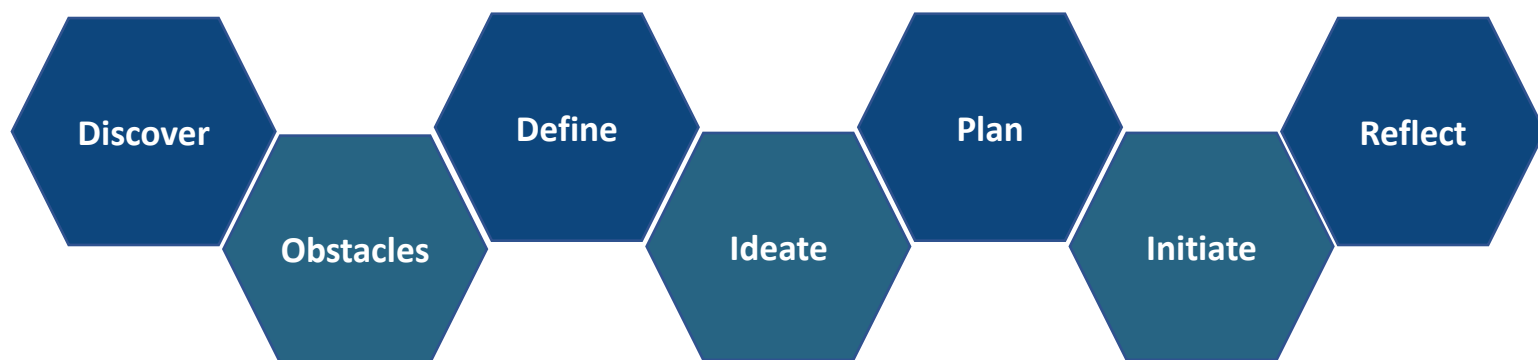
Action Planning

As part of your group discussion, please determine the following:

Who is going to work on the plan to address areas of need? [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

When will your team check in about the progress of this work? [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

To help with action planning, we've provided the following template as an example process. Please use a process that works best for your team and context. Action planning should be completed outside of this meeting and progress should be regularly shared with your team to keep moving this work forward.



Discover – What do you need to work on?

Probing Questions: After engaging in this workshop, what areas of your work need improvement? Choose two or three domains to focus on for your initial action

planning. What processes and systems do you need to advance? What needs to be done differently to stave off distress in the future?

- 1.) [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- 2.) [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- 3.) [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Obstacles – What conditions exist that may impact your success?

Probing Questions: What are the barriers to addressing the areas you have identified above? How are these conditions affecting others (your team, schools, governing boards, charter community)?

Barriers Present	Impact of Barriers
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

Define – What does success look like?

Probing Questions: How will you know you have effectively addressed the areas you have identified? What are you hoping to accomplish? What are the intended measurable outcomes?

What Does Success Look Like?	What Are Your Intended Outcomes?
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

Ideate – What are the various ways you can tackle this challenge?

Probing Questions: What can you do to turn success into reality? What ideas do you have to support this work? Who else can help you generate solutions? List 3-5 proposed tactics below with details on how you might execute each method.

- 1.) [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- 2.) [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- 3.) [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- 4.) [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- 5.) [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Plan – What steps do you need to take to put these ideas into action?

What are the steps needed to tackle the issue you've identified? Who do you need to involve in the process? What resources do you need? What timeline are you going to hold yourself accountable to?

Tactic	Steps Required	Who Should Be Involved?	Resources Needed	Timeline
<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>

Initiate – Put your plan into action!

Move out of the planning stage and into the action stage!

Reflect – How is your plan going?

Probing Questions: Is your plan on the path towards success? What isn't working? How can you course correct? Are you having the impact you desired? What could you be doing differently to ensure success?

Intended Outcomes	How You Will Measure Outcome	Results/Reflection
<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
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<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>

How to Scan Your Context to Prevent Distress

This section is designed to help guide your team's discussion of **Part 2 of 3 videos** for asynchronous facilitation. Please follow the prompts in the video and complete the workbook as instructed.

Rate Your Relationships

On a scale of 1 to 5, rank the status of your school's external relationships, 1 being we have no relationship with the stakeholder to 5 being we have excellent relationships with the stakeholder.

External Relationship	Your Rank	Your Team's Average
Authorizer	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
Community	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
Parents	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
Network (If Applicable)	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
District	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
State	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>
Other External Stakeholders	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>

Discussion Questions

In what ways is our context challenging our sustainability?

Click or tap here to enter text.

What are the looming threats, both internal and external, to our school and its effective functioning?

Click or tap here to enter text.

What do our data, stakeholder feedback, and scan of the environment tell us about our vulnerabilities?

Click or tap here to enter text.

Where are our blind spots?

Click or tap here to enter text.

How might our existing systems, processes, and policies contribute to turning challenges into distress and decline? How might they support mitigating these challenges?

Click or tap here to enter text.

What steps should our school take to minimize the challenges we identify? What changes to organizational processes should we make? What resources or assets do we have or can obtain to make realization of distress less likely?

Click or tap here to enter text.

Five Takeaways

- 1.) *Click or tap here to enter text.*
- 2.) *Click or tap here to enter text.*
- 3.) *Click or tap here to enter text.*
- 4.) *Click or tap here to enter text.*
- 5.) *Click or tap here to enter text.*

Five Action Steps

- 1.) *Click or tap here to enter text.*
- 2.) *Click or tap here to enter text.*
- 3.) *Click or tap here to enter text.*
- 4.) *Click or tap here to enter text.*
- 5.) *Click or tap here to enter text.*

How to Pivot in Response to Challenges to Prevent Distress

This section is designed to help guide your team's discussion of **Part 3 of 3 videos** for asynchronous facilitation. Please follow the prompts in the video and complete the workbook as instructed.

Is Your School Showing Signs of Distress? Self-Reflection

Indicators of Distress	Are we showing signs of distress?	Are we currently addressing these signs of distress?
Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to execute systems to address school needs • Overextended leadership • Defensive or suspicious leadership • <i>Finding Specific to Networked-Schools:</i> Stunted ability to address school needs 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Governing Board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of capacity to execute governance role • No long-term sustainability strategy • Out of touch with school population needs 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Finance and Operations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragile enrollment • Absence of systems to maintain financial viability • Poor budget management and spending decisions • <i>Finding Specific to Networked-Schools:</i> Lack of fiscal autonomy at the school level 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Talent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pattern of high teacher turnover • Declining staff capacity • Lack of systems to develop and sustain capacity 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chaotic student culture • Discontented staff culture • Weak family and community connection 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Indicators of Distress	Are we showing signs of distress?	Are we currently addressing these signs of distress?
Instruction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of curriculum alignment with standards and across grade levels • No systems to support high-quality instruction • Finding Specific to Networked-Schools: Misaligned instructional decisions • Absence of systems for sufficient student supports 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Is Your School Showing Signs of Distress? Group Discussion

Now take your responses to the questions above and discuss them as a group, using a show of hands. If your group is not unanimous for a domain, take a moment to discuss why and determine if you are indeed showing signs of distress and/or taking actions to address the distress.

Indicators of Distress	Are we showing signs of distress?	Are we currently addressing these signs of distress?
Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Governing Board	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Finance and Operations	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Talent	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Culture	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Instruction	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Group Discussion

Have we identified a short- and long-term response plan, considering how to buffer each of the school domain categories from the greatest impact?

Click or tap here to enter text.

What do our data, stakeholder feedback, and scan of the environment tell us about how we are addressing these challenges?

Click or tap here to enter text.

In what ways does our financial and operational planning allow for flexibility? For how long?

Click or tap here to enter text.

How will we document the lessons from this challenge, and how can we implement strategies to strengthen the school's response in the future?

Click or tap here to enter text.

Five Takeaways

- 1.) *Click or tap here to enter text.*
- 2.) *Click or tap here to enter text.*
- 3.) *Click or tap here to enter text.*
- 4.) *Click or tap here to enter text.*
- 5.) *Click or tap here to enter text.*

Five Action Steps

- 1.) *Click or tap here to enter text.*
- 2.) *Click or tap here to enter text.*
- 3.) *Click or tap here to enter text.*
- 4.) *Click or tap here to enter text.*
- 5.) *Click or tap here to enter text.*